

The Cleveland
Museum of Art
11150 East
Boulevard
Cleveland, Ohio
44106-1797

Picasso
and Things:
The Still Lives
of Picasso
February 26-
May 3, 1992

November 8, 1991

Contact: Adele Z. Silver

PICASSO AS PRINTMAKER and PICASSO'S CONTEMPORARIES
January 28 - April 26, 1992

Two exhibitions of prints which accompany the major special exhibition, **Picasso and Things: The Still Lives of Picasso**, will be on view in the Prints and Drawings galleries of The Cleveland Museum of Art from January 28 through April 26, 1992. **Picasso as Printmaker** draws primarily on the Museum's collection, with a few loans from the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, and local private collectors. Picasso often explored the subjects and themes of his paintings in great depth in his printmaking, where numerous states of individual prints testify to his searching imagination. Over a 60-year period, he produced about 2500 intaglio prints, lithographs, and linocuts--a commitment to the art of printmaking unmatched by any other 20th-century master.

Picasso as Printmaker contains examples of the artist's prints throughout his long career. The Cleveland Museum owns 46 prints by Picasso, which includes one of his earliest attempts at printmaking, the etching of 1904, Frugal Repast, and fourteen from the set of Saltimbanques of 1904-05. There are excellent examples from the 1930s (Lysistrata, The Dream and Lie of Franco, La Barre d'Appui, and Blind Minotaur Guided by a Little Girl, I); from the 1940s (Two Nude Women, The Dog from Histoire Naturelle, and Still Life with Glass and Flowers); and from the 1950s (The Picador and The Wounded Picador). The Museum collection includes only one linoleum cut, the technique to which he turned in the 1950s (Still Life Under the Lamp), and is therefore borrowing four others from private collectors, as well as three etchings from 1968, a period not represented in the Museum collection. Four works in the exhibition will be of still lifes--Goat's Skull on a Table and Still Life, Fruit Dish from the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, and from The Cleveland Museum of Art, Still Life Under the Lamp and Still Life with Glass.

and Flowers--as the exhibition is designed not to explore the subject of the main exhibition but to present themes and techniques that Picasso worked out in prints.

One of the great attractions of printmaking for Picasso was the opportunity to produce endless variations on a theme while retaining examples of each change. He particularly liked lithography because with it, more than with any other medium, a great range of tones between jet black and pure white can be achieved. In 1945-46 Picasso produced the lithograph, Two Nude Women, which he worked through 21 states, progressing from a thoroughly realistic image to an extremely abstract one. Only 19 impressions of each state (other than the last state) exist, and the Museum owns impressions of ten of the 21 states; all will be exhibited, showing Picasso's fertile imagination at work.

Picasso was exceptionally inventive with each printmaking technique, mastering it almost as soon as he began experimenting and then finding new ways to exploit its unique characteristics. As one example, he developed a new method for linoleum cuts: instead of cutting a different block for each color, Picasso used only one block. First, he used the uncut block to print the background color. Then he would cut away the areas that would remain the background color and print the next color; he repeated this process for each color, progressively removing more and more of the block until it was finally destroyed. The method is extraordinarily difficult, as any error ruins the entire project. It was used for the Museum's Still Life Under the Lamp.

Notable in the exhibition **Picasso as Printmaker** are fourteen subjects from the La Suite Des Saltimbanques, which pictures wandering entertainers who live in their own community on the margins of bourgeois society, a metaphor for Picasso's own situation at the time. Six etchings illustrate a retelling of a 5th-century BC drama by Aristophanes, in which Lysistrata convinces the other women of Athens to leave their marriage beds until the men of Athens and Sparta agree to end twenty years of war. The two etchings and aquatints, The Dream and Lie of Franco, reflect Picasso's staunch support of the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil War and were produced in protest to benefit the Spanish Republic. Using the iconography of the bullfight, translated into fantastic, horrifying imagery, he conveyed his contempt for Franco.

Picasso's Contemporaries will exhibit about 100 lithographs, etchings, linoleum cuts, woodcuts, drypoints, and engravings by about twenty artists who made prints of diverse subjects and styles in Paris from the 1920s through the 1950s. Foremost among them is Henri Matisse, whose etchings and linoleum cuts are distinguished by their simplicity. Matisse's drawing is so quick and decisive, spontaneous and fluid, that with only a few lines he gives an impression of completeness. His lithographs of the 1920s exploit that medium's ability to achieve beautiful tones of gray as well as rich blacks. These studies of models are varied: nude or draped, in conventional or radically contorted poses, they are all strongly modelled and meticulously delineated.

Georges Rouault was almost exclusively concerned with religious or moral themes. Influenced by his studies of the restoration of stained glass, he outlined forms with heavy black lines and filled in areas with bright color aquatint. His most famous work, Miserere (1948), consists of 58 intaglio prints which juxtapose dramatic portrayals of Christian subjects with satirical representations of human nature.

Other artists, including the Surrealists, also expressed their main concerns in prints as well as in other media. Joan Miro's drypoint, from Series Black and Red of 1938, exemplifies his biomorphic forms. Surrealism also influenced Salvador Dali's etching and drypoint of 1934, an illustration for Les Chants de Maldoror, which shows the importance of the unconscious, and Jean Arp's woodcut Siamesisches Blatt, which demonstrates automatism. Among the variety of prints exhibited are Fernand Léger's colorful lithographs, Cirque (1950), which express the joy of his visit to American circuses, and Aristide Maillol's lithographs of nude women which reflect the sculptor's interest in the human body. Both Jacques Villon and Robert Delaunay are represented by Cubist prints--Delaunay's is the famous large, imposing lithograph of a fractured, dynamic Eiffel Tower, La Tour.

A complete list of the prints in both exhibitions will be available.

#####